

**INTERCHANGEABLE FOOTWEAR SYSTEM**

The present invention relates to shoes and more particularly to shoes adapted to accept a range of interchangeable covers so as to alter appearance.

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**BACKGROUND**

Footwear has long come to serve additional functions to that of mere utility. The desirability for variations of style, colour and decoration, particularly in the areas of children's, ladies' and sport related footwear requires the purchase of multiple pairs of shoes. Moreover, to change from one style or appearance of footwear to another while away from home, requires that additional bulky pairs of shoes are taken along.

15 It is an object of the present invention to address or ameliorate at least one of the above disadvantages.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION**

Accordingly, in one broad form of the invention there is provided an interchangeable footwear system comprising a shoe assembly including

- 20
- (a) a base shoe
  - (b) interchangeable covers

in which any one of a plurality of said covers are adapted to allow fitting to said base shoe forming an assembly so as to change the appearance and use environment of said shoe assembly.

5        Preferably said base shoe comprises a sole portion and an upper portion.

         Preferably said sole portion is provided with an upwardly extending perimeter rim portion.

         Preferably said upwardly extending perimeter rim  
10    portion is provided with a first mating element.

         Preferably said interchangeable covers are provided with a second mating element along the lower perimeter of said covers,

         Preferably said first mating element is female.

15        Preferably said first mating element is male.

         Preferably said second mating element is male.

         Preferably said second mating element is female.

         Preferably said first and second mating elements are substantially V-shaped in section.

20        Preferably said V-shaped sections of said mating elements are provided with matching protrusions and recesses so as to provide a snap-fit when said cover is assembled to said base shoe.

Preferably said base shoes are provided in a range of shapes, and sizes.

Preferably said covers are provided in a matching range of shapes and sizes adapted to fit said base shoes.

5        Preferably said covers are provided in a range of colours and patterns.

Preferably said base shoe and said covers are made from any of a selection of materials, said selection including leather, canvas, rubber, plastic and other  
10        synthetic materials.

Preferably a one of said covers includes an indicia-receiving portion.

Preferably said indicia-receiving portion is adapted to display promotional indicia.

15        In a further broad form of the invention there is provided a method of altering the appearance of a shoe, said method comprising utilising the interchangeable footwear system of any preceding claim.

## 20        BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a side elevation view of a base shoe according to an embodiment of the present invention,

Figure 2 is a side elevation view of a shoe cover according a preferred embodiment of the invention,

5        Figure 3 is a detail of a cross section of the mating system between base shoe and cover according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

10        A first preferred embodiment of a interchangeable footwear system according to the invention will now be described with reference to Figures 1 and 2.

A base shoe 10 is provided with a sole 11 and upper portion 12. Sole 11 is further provided around its  
15        perimeter with an upwardly extending rim portion 13. Both sole 11 and upper portion 12 may be constructed from conventional shoe materials including leather, canvas, rubber, plastic and other synthetic materials.

Preferably rim portion 13 is formed from a moulded  
20        resilient material and forms a first mating element 14.

With reference to Figure 2, shoe cover 15 consists of a sheath open at its underside 16 and provided around its lower perimeter 17 with second mating element 18. Cover 15 is adapted to slip over the upper portion 12 of base shoe

10 with first and second mating elements 14 and 18 engaging so as to retain cover 15 on base shoe 10.

Figure 3 shows a preferred embodiment of mating elements 14 and 18 where the perimeter rim portion 13 of base shoe sole 11 is provided with female moulded engagement means 19 and the lower perimeter 17 of cover 15 is provided with moulded male engagement means 20.

In the embodiment of Figure 3, sole portion female engagement means 19 is provided with a substantially V-shaped section 21 having projections 22 and recesses 23 along both inner surfaces of the V. Upper portion 15 male engagement means 20 has matching V-shaped section 24 with like projections 25 and recesses 26 such that the projections 22 and recesses 23 of sole portion female engagement means 19 provide a snap fit with recesses 26 and projections 25 of upper portion male engagement means.

Preferably lower perimeter 17 may be provided with waterproofing lip 27 so as to prevent ingress of water into the engagement means.

Preferably base shoes 10 may be provided with a plainly constructed upper portions 12 providing no more than a scaffold for the addition of covers. Alternatively, upper portions 12 of base shoes 10 may be adapted to a particular appearance or use environment.

In a further preferred embodiment, covers may be provided with logos or other proprietary indicia, or otherwise personalized to reflect an interest or taste of the wearer.

5 In use, covers are made available in a matching range of sizes and shapes to suit base shoes. A wearer may purchase a pair of base shoes with or without one or more covers. Further covers may be purchased subsequently.

Although the above description refers to shoes it will  
10 be understood that the concept of the invention may be applied to other forms of footwear including boots and certain configurations of sandals.

The above describes only some embodiments of the present invention and modifications, obvious to those  
15 skilled in the art, can be made thereto without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.